

## CLAIMS

1. An X-strap assembly for securing an article of footwear to the instep of a foot, said footwear having a sole and channel through said sole, said strap assembly comprising:

- 5           a) a strap (1) attached at its respective ends (3, 11) to medial and lateral heel sides (5, 9) of said footwear, said strap (1) having a first portion extending in a forward direction transversely across the instep from a first side of said footwear to a second side, a second portion extending through said channel, and a third portion extending in a rearward direction transversely across the instep from said instep from said first side to said second side of said footwear, said first and said third portions forming an X-configuration over said instep; and
- 10           b) a fastener (23, 25) attached to said strap.

2. An article of footwear, comprising:

- 15           a) a sole (51), the sole having a midfoot portion and a heel portion;
- b) a channel (47) extending transversely across the midfoot portion of said sole;
- c) an instep strap (41) connected to said heel portion of said sole (51), said strap (41) having a first portion extending in a forward direction transversely across a wearer's instep from one side of said sole (51) to the other, a second portion extending through said channel (47) and slideable within said channel (47), and a third portion extending in a rearward direction transversely across the wearer's instep from said one side to said other side of said sole, the first and third portions of said strap forming an X configuration over the wearer's instep, and the second portion being between the first and third portions of said strap (41); and
- 20           d) an adjustable fastener (55) attached to said strap (41) for adjusting said strap.
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3. An article of footwear as in claim 2, wherein said midfoot portion of said sole (51) includes a shank (114), said shank at least partly underlying said sole (51), said shank being stiffer than said sole (51), said channel (47) extending through said shank (114).

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4. An article of footwear, as in claim 3, wherein said channel (47) is angled downwardly from rear to front in a longitudinal direction;

5. An article of footwear as in claim 4 further comprising a heel portion strap assembly (59), a forefoot strap assembly (69) and a lateral strap (59) extending therebetween.

6. A footwear product to be worn by a user on the user's foot, comprising:

- 5           a) a sole (51);
- b) a transverse passageway (47) extending through said sole (51); and
- c) a strap system configured to secure the footwear product to the user's foot including:

                  a heel portion (59),

10           an X-strap assembly coupled to said heel portion, wherein said X-strap assembly includes a continuous strap (41) having a first portion extending transversely across the user's instep from a first side of the footwear to a second side, a second portion extending through said transverse passageway (47), and a third portion extending transversely across the user's instep from said first side to said second side of said footwear, said first and said third

15           portions of said X-strap assembly forming an X-configuration over the user's instep, and

                  an adjustable fastener (55) for adjusting the length of said X-strap assembly.